

The voice of Kalimpong

Himalayan Times

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BEAUTY QUEEN WEARS DEATH CROWN ON OPERATION TABLE

— Anup Moktan

She was a Femina Miss India top ten finalist and could have become the Gladrag Mrs. India 2004 had the doctors attending to her not sent her to an early grave.

"Doctors are Divine" was an article that was written in this very magazine some months back by a very reputed and respected gentleman of the town. Had the doctors treating Srijana been even close to being competent, forget being divine, Srijana probably would have made history as being the first lady from the Nepali community to have been crowned Mrs. India!!! But fate had other things planned for her- she did go down in history not as a Mrs. India but as another person killed by hands which were supposed to cure!!!

Srijana Idrani (Pradhan) died a premature death on 22nd November, 2003 in Kolkata, apparently due to negligence and carelessness on the part of the doctors who treated her. Srijana used to live with her family in Kolkata where her father, Geoffrey Samson, worked in the Merchant Navy. Her mother Madhu hails from Kalimpong. While in Kolkata, she fell in love with Rajesh Idrani aka Rocky and tied the knot on 1st April, 2002. After that, her parents shifted to Kalimpong while she continued her conjugal life in Kolkata. A year later, their son Jeenu, was born. All was going well until 25th October, 2003, when she complained of pain in the lower abdomen. On the suggestion of her family doctor, she took an ultrasonography which revealed that she was seven weeks pregnant, but the foetus was in the Fallopian tube instead of the Uterus. On 27th October, a reputed doctor performed an abortion on her. However an ultrasonography performed later identified the foetus still inside her. Another attempt to remove the foetus on 5th November proved unsuccessful. The doctor operating on her had extracted a lump of flesh and had sent it to the laboratory for tests; the tests revealed that the lump was not the foetus! The pain continued even after the operations and Rajesh could not find the doctor who had operated on her. Later, Srijana was admitted to a private Nursing home in South Kolkata where it was revealed that the foetus was still inside. To add to the woes, Srijana was diagnosed with septicemia. Eventually, she died on 22nd November, 2003. She was 26 year old.

Quite typically, justice has not yet been delivered. Srijana's husband Rajesh wrote to the Chief Minister and Police Commissioner of Kolkata demanding speedy delivery of justice. The death of Srijana has shattered the entire family. "It is really difficult to imagine what my daughter went through. What had she done to deserve this?" says a distraught Madhu Pradhan who now stays in 9th Mile with her husband.

"The hospital was a slaughter-house and the doctors are murderers. They cut up my wife removed her organs and killed her," alleged Rajesh over phone from Kolkata. "Ours was a love marriage and I've lost my mental peace over this whole



Srijana Idrani

issue. I will not rest until I get justice. I want to get justice for my son who was only 10 months then," Rajesh told Himalayan Times.

The latest news is that three doctors, viz. Dr. Gargi Banerjee, Dr. M.S. Banerjee and Dr. T Viju Singh have been found to be guilty of gross negligence as per the findings of a forensic expert of Calcutta Medical Collage, Dr. Ajay Gupta.

Srijana was also into modeling. She was among the top ten in the Miss India contest. She was also selected to participate in the Mrs. India contest but she passed away on the very day the contest was to be held.

Rajesh, Madhu, Geoffrey and Jeenu now pray that justice be done and the guilty are punished. "We have suffered immensely and we hope that our crusade against such negligence will help others not to suffer the same fate," says Madhu. □

EDITORIAL

The National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) which is presently engaged in the damming of the River Teesta at several places has now almost become a sort of favourite whipping boys for several sections of the society. It has come to become some type of a monster which everyone relishes to have a go at.

With the DGHC elections still nowhere in sight, the presently out of work politicians find the NHPC a God sent opportunity to remain in the newspapers. We in the print media, ever hard pressed to file regular news reports, fall back to filing reports on the NHPC whenever we find that there is no other story to file and of course for several of the NGO's- attacking the NHPC is a must for the simple reason that this is their bread and butter.

In a way, NHPC deserves all the flak it is getting and in fact much more. The fatal accident at the construction site of the **Teesta Low Dam Project Site III (TLDP III)** has given more ammunition to all the agitators to take pot shots at the NHPC. The loss of almost a dozen lives (the official communiqué from the NHPC bosses says the figure is just four) is definitely very unfortunate and could have been avoided had more caution been exercised and I am sure that these deaths will bother the NHPC for as long as the project on the Teesta goes on. But I dare say that being the construction giant it is and seeing the scores of mega projects of similar nature to that of the Teesta project, NHPC undertakes each year and year after year, the death of a dozen or so labourers at their construction sites, will hardly be more than a pin prick for the NHPC.

Seeing this callous attitude of the NHPC and its scant regards for human lives all the criticism and the media bashing it is getting is fully justified. But my sincere feeling is that now that hundreds of crores have already been spent by the NHPC, no amount of media bashing or protests can actually stop the NHPC from going ahead with the project, however flawed or however good it may be. We, I believe, have to now reconcile to the fact that our river is being dammed and will be dammed whether we like it or not or whether our already fragile and sensitive eco-system will support or not or whether or not the reservoir will trigger seismic activities in future!!! The fact is that Teesta will be dammed and it is best that we accept the fact (bitter though it may be).

In view of the above, I feel that protests relating to the dam construction is not just futile and a waste of time but will be something which will draw our attentions away from the more important issues at hand. What in my opinion we should be protesting about and writing about at this period of time, is the issue of corruption that plagues the TLDP as well as the issue of promises not fulfilled by the NHPC. Several contractors working on the TLDP have tipped off **Himalayan Times** on the issue of corruption in this mega project. This issue of corruption merits serious journalistic investigation and **Himalayan Times** is already at it and hopefully can apprise the readers about it at a later date. Newsmen, NGO's and Politicians would do well if their efforts are now aimed at the issue of corruption and unfulfilled promises rather than on trying to stop construction at the project sites. After all once the project is complete and done with, the NHPC will disappear from the scene and it will be us, the locals, holding the baby all by ourselves.

We cannot allow some corrupt characters involved in the project to ruin the entire hills for the sake of his personal financial gains, can we???

Dear Sir,
The cover story in the last issue of Himalayan Times, (Volume 2, Issue 10), made very interesting reading. Karan Shah has very aptly analyzed that all is not rosy as far as education in the metros is concerned. In my very own family my nephew (whose father is in Dubai), was sent to Bangalore for further studies. Rather than coming back to Kalimpong with a degree in computer engineering for which he was sent there in the first place, he returned here a broken and spent soul totally dependent on chemical substances. Only we the family know what we went through trying to bring him back to normal. Of course now he is fully out of this dependency and has settled down in life but not before giving us a lesson which we will never forget in life.

I feel that not every student passing out from Class ten in the Hills is cut out to be sent to the big cities for an education. Many of our children would do better if they receive their further educations right here in the Hills. Now with B.B. College of Management and Good Shepherd IHM having started in Kalimpong, new opportunities have opened up here in Kalimpong itself and this should be grabbed by the parents in the region.

I hope parents in Kalimpong weigh the pros and cons of the above subject before taking a decision to send their wards to the cities.

Ramesh Golay
Kalimpong

Dear Sir,
First and foremost, my congratulations to you for the very attractive layout of the last issue of your magazine. The red and white combination has given the magazine a very distinct look and is very eye catching.

Having my entire family there in Kalimpong has kept my interest in Kalimpong still going strong despite the fact that I have been living in Shillong for the past nine years where I own a restaurant. The Himalayan Times I receive by post has kept me abreast with all the latest happenings in Kalimpong. The article by Wg. Col. Prafulla Rao (whom I know as being the kind Dr. Rao's son), really has forwarded some very disturbing questions about the ecological impact of rampant constructions in Kalimpong. I hope the authorities will take note of the problems raised in the above mentioned article and find solutions to the same. I am sure that Mr. C.K. Kura, the Chairman of Kalimpong Municipality, whom I know to be a very sincere and hardworking administrator and a straight politician, will take note of the article and act accordingly.

Gautem Rizal
(via e-mail from Shillong)

**DO YOU HAVE ANY THING THAT
YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH THE
REST OF
KALIMPONG??? YOUR
HAVE YOUR SAY AT PAGE**

CASH after CATCH

■ Sandip C. Jain

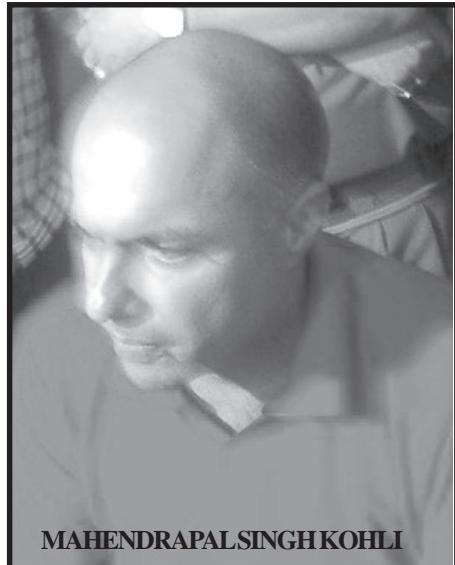
True to their promise, the Hampshire Police Department has come back and distributed the Rs. Fifty Lakhs that they had promised as award to those who provided leads which ultimately led to the arrest of Mahendrapal Singh Kohli.

It may be recalled that Kohli, the alleged rapist and killer of 17 year old Hannah Foster of Hampshire England, was apprehended at Panighatta on the 15th of July 2004, and later handed over to the Punjab Police. Kohli who had been on

the run had been staying in Kalimpong for eight months before the long arm of the law finally caught up with him. He had also managed to deceive a local girl, Bharati Das, into marrying him and was living in Kalimpong masquerading as a doctor from the United Nations.

The award of Rs. Fifty Lakhs had been contributed by the Hampshire Constabulary and The Sun newspaper who had chipped in Rs. Forty Five Lakhs and Rs. Five Lakhs respectively. The amount was to be distributed amongst fourteen informants, each of whom were to receive Rs. 3.57 Lakhs each. In the third week of July, Mr. Alan Betts, the Detective Superintendent of Hampshire Police arrived to distribute the promised award money. It is learnt that the fourteen on the list were from Gangtok, Darjeeling and Kalimpong though for reasons best known to the Hampshire Police, the names of all the fourteen was kept a secret. In fact the entire matter was a hush hush affair with Mr. Betts playing shy from the media.

One of those who received the reward from Kalimpong and who was willing to talk to the media was Mr. Anthony Pradhan. From amongst the public, Anthony's role in the tracing down the alleged criminal is considered the largest. Infact at one time Anthony name was being considered by the Hampshire Police Department as the sole recipient of the reward. Confirming this Anthony says, "Yes I believe I was being considered by the Hampshire Police as the sole recipient of the reward but at a later date they phoned me up to enquire if I would object if the reward is split up between other claimants too. Since I did not object, the reward money was equally divided amongst all of us. (This



MAHENDRAPAL SINGH KOHLI

correspondent is proof of the above conversation between Mr. Anthony and Mr. Betts which took place about three months back as this correspondent was present when Mr. Betts had phoned up Anthony).

Sources revealed that the list of fourteen also included the name of Mr. Oath Bahadur Das, father of Bharati Das. Das has refused to accept the award money. "I provided information about Kohli purely on humanitarian grounds and not for the sake of money. Like Hannah's parents I too have a daughter who was a victim and hence I feel for the Foster family. My principles do not allow me to accept this money," said Das.

Speaking to **Himalayan Times** Mr. Betts while refusing to disclose the names on the list said, "We had made a promise and I am here on behalf of the Hampshire Police to keep our promise. I feel that all those who received the award truly deserve the reward as without their tip off Kohli would still be at large. Speaking about Bharati Das he said, "I can understand what the Das family, specially Bharati, is going through due to our presence here. It is like rubbing salt on to a wound but I had to come so that we could keep our promise."

Kohli is at present in the custody of the Punjab Police who are investigating a Pass Port fraud against him. The Delhi Police too wants Kohli for questioning in connection with the rape case involving a Swiss national in Delhi. □

FUTURE OF KALIMPONG



ANANYA SINGH LAMBA
DOB 17.12.2003

If you want your child's photograph to feature here, all you have to do is to send us a recent photograph of your child alongwith the Date Of Birth.

Bhanu Jayanti C e l e b r a t e d

By Anup Moktan

The 191st birth anniversary of Nepali poem Bhanubhakta Acharya was celebrated with much pomp and vigor, The Nepali Sahitya Adhyayan Samiti, like every year, had organized a two-day function to mark Bhanu Jayanti on the second week of July.

The programme started with the garlanding of the Bhanu Bhakta statue at Trikon Park. A Ramayana-recitation contest was organized at Town Hall, where Dr. Jas Yonzon Pyasi, Lecturer, Bijanbari Degree College, and a poet himself, was the chief guest. In the afternoon, the Bhaichand Pradhan

Memorial Award, initiated in 2004, was presented to poet Bichandra for his collection of poems – “Bipashyana”. Poet Bichandra is also the Raiganj DSP and hails from Mirik. The chief Guest on the second day was Lalit Pariyar, former secretary, DGHC. A poetry and Ramayana recitation contest was also organized. Two students securing highest marks in Nepali in the ICSE Examinations were felicitated. But the highlight of the day was the Purna Rai Memorial Award which was presented to Sanjay Bista, Lecturer, Kalimpong College, for his short story – “Pul”. The, short story published in ‘Sahitya Sanket’, the mouthpiece of the Samiti, was

adjudged the best entry between 2002-04. “Writing was a hobby for me, but now it has become sort of a duty,” said Sanjay Bista. Commenting about students of the Nepali Language, he said, “The vernacular educational system at the primary and secondary level is not satisfactory. Actually, schools should be the base but when the students come to college we have to teach them from the beginning. The students do not have basic knowledge of the language.” He further added, ‘the belief of the students that they will pass without studying in Nepali, just because it is their mother tongue, is a flawed concept.’

cartoon



"It is welfare not warfare!!! Just because we drink & party and fight amongst ourselves,you cannot change the principles, policies & entire visions of our organization."

New Wai Wai Brand in Kalimpong

Fast Foods Nepali, the makers of Wai Wai, launched a new brand in Kalimpong in July. While the old brand was a pre-cooked noodle which could be eaten without bothering to light up the stove, the new one has to be cooked before consumption. “Our closest competitor is Maggi and the only difference between the two is that while Maggi has one seasoning, we have two. Hence, the taste is much better,” Anjan Bhattacharya, DGM – Marketing and Advertising, told the Himalayan Times. The company in an effort to promote their new product served cooked samples of the same to thousands of students of the various schools of Kalimpong. It is further learnt that the company has decided to set up a manufacturing unit in Sikkim for the production of Wai Wai.

"You mean just one???" I don't believe it!!!!"

By Sandip C. Jain

"You mean just one?? Don't tell me"- was the shocked response of G.S. Shekawat. "I don't believe it, probably you don't know well enough," Shekawat went on, in his disbelief even doubting my knowledge about my very own town in which I have spent all the thirty years of my life. And the topic under discussion which made Shekawat, (a resident of Ludhiana in Punjab and an executive with an MC) doubt my knowledge, was AIM'S in Kalimpong. But Shekawat truly has valid reasons too be shocked- a town with a population of almost 70,000 which has become a business hubs for the surrounding area - which claims to be an a major tourist destination and wants a slice of the Tictet Trade pie yet having just one ATM surely is something to be shocked about.

A town which has thousands of senior citizens drawing their pension, a town which has over a dozen good high school with a couple of thousand outstation students, a town with hundreds of business establishment including nurseries and a town having a large large population of people in government as well as armed services, surely deserves more than one ATM counter, "Gangtok, though a state capital but of almost similar size and similar population, has close to a dozen ATM - infact every street corner seems to have one so, why does Kalimpong not merit at least two - three more AIM' s", says Mr . Alvin Lara of Good Shepherd Institute of Management. He goes on to say

"A person living in 10th mile or Relie Road has to walk all the way to Main Road just to access the ATM. This defies the very basic concept of AIM' s" Mr . Thurba Pradhan agrees with him saying, "While I was working in Gujarat even small towns had ATMs within stone throw distances of each other so why cannot Kalimpong too have at least a couple more."

While this writer was at the S.B.I talking to a senior staff of the branch on the subject of rare ATMs, the bank as usual was jam packed with customers like sardines in a bottle. Pointing at the direction of the crowd the Bank staff said, "Just look at the them, had there been more ATMs they would not have had to suffer such a fate just to deposit or withdraw their very own hard earned money. "One middle aged women who was being pushed around by the crowd inside the bank said, "I dread my weekly visits to the bank. The way I am pushed and jostled around by the crowd is something no self respecting lady would like. I have to leave behind all my self respect and dignity at home before I come to the bank."

Are the management of three major banks in Kalimpong listening? □



SBI ATM in KALIMPONG

What is Sixth Schedule (Reproduced from the Hindustan Times)

The Political crisis in Darjeeling appears to have deepened with Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) chief Subash Ghisingh demanding that the whole of Darjeeling district be brought under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution.

In the fifth round of tripartite talks held in Delhi on July 1, the Centre and the state government agreed in principle to grant 6th Schedule status to the DHC (Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) area, a territory smaller than the district confined to the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong.

The schedule, framed In accordance with the Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Constitution, presently governs the tribal areas of Assam and Meghalaya.

As per the Schedule, the Governor of a state may, by public notification, declare a tribal district an autonomous area, paving the way for the formation of a district council consisting of not more than 30 members - 26 of them elected

and four nominated by the Governor . In case of multiple autonomous regions within a tribal area, each area will have a regional council.

A regional council or district council can constitute village councils or courts. Within their area of jurisdiction and can try certain suits and cases between Scheduled Tribes of that region.

The district council can establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, fisheries, ferries, roads, road transport and water ways in the district. With the previous approval of the Governor , it can make regulations regarding these, chose the medium of instruction in primary schools and decide on how to run them.

Each autonomous district also has its own funds and the Governor can make rules regarding the way in which the money is managed. The accounts of the autonomous district council has to be maintained in the form laid down by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

The council also has powers to regulate and control money-lending and trading by non-tribals.

However , the council will not be able to refuse licence to a money-lender or trader carrying on business in the district before it is brought under the 6th Schedule.

The Governor , however , retains the power to strike down any act or resolution of the council, which he feels is likely to endanger the country's safety or is likely to be prejudicial to public order . If he thinks it necessary, he may even order the suspension of the council. In the event of the council being dissolved, the Governor may order a fresh election or , subject to the approval of the state legislature, assure charge of the administration of the council or place the area under the authority of any other body he considers suitable for a period not exceeding 12 months.

The tribal areas under the 6th Schedule at present are: North Cachar Hill District and Karbi Anglong District, in Assam, the Khasi Hill Districts and the Jaintia Hill District, in Meghalaya. □

science museum site approved

karan shah

The Director General of National Council of Science Museum (NCSM) visited Deolo Hill in the second week of July for the final site selections for the Sub-Regional Science Center here in Kalimpong.

After his visit Mr. Ingit Mukherjee, Director General of NCSM, confirmed the construction of the center. "Work will probably start by the third week of September", Mr Mukherjee said.

Slated to be the first of its kind in the Darjeeling hills this centre will be situated at the 5-acre DGHC land at Deolo hill, which has already been surveyed and approved, by the Land and Land



Mr. Mukherjee with Dawa Pakhrin and others at the project site at Deolo

Reforms Department and the Kalimpong Engineering Division (KED).

The central government will be funding about eighty percent of the total cost which is expected to be about Rs. Two Crore while the rest of the funds will come from the DGHC. According to NCSM norms, the project once started would have to be completed within 24 months.

On the occasion the GNLF Kalimpong branch president Mr. Dawa Pakhrin said that this project would not have been possible without the efforts of the DGHC chairman Mr. Subash Ghisingh. "We thank him on behalf of the people of Kalimpong", he added. □

Rag pickers scavenging from a drain in Kalimpong!!! So much for Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and protests against child labour!!



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DREAMS IN DANGER

■ Karan Shah

Seventeen-year-old Dipesh Kalikotey topped the higher secondary examination this year in the sub division as he had done in his Madhyamik examination, two years ago. He has recently even passed the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and has secured a seat in the Jalpaiguri Government Engineering College.

Dipesh's dream had always been to study Engineering but financial constraints now keep him away from seeking admission even in the Engineering College. "He is one brilliant child that studied in our school. Dipesh always stood first from the very beginning of his school days. He not only topped the Madhyamik examination but has also outshined everyone else in this year's Higher Secondary Examination. Moreover, he has also passed the joint entrance examination which is not a simple feat," said Mr NR Pradhan, Principal of the Scottish University Mission Institution (SUMI), the school from which Dipesh completed his schooling. "He will definitely shine and be an asset for Kalimpong if given a chance," he added.

Speaking about his dream to study further Dipesh said, "I want to continue my studies further and even do my masters in technology. However, it is hard for my family to make ends meet so I do get disheartened at times. "Even my syllabus books were lent to me by my seniors I could not afford them", he says.

"Sometimes, I do feel that I should just let go of my dreams and start looking for work but I really don't want to do that. I am determined to finish my bachelor in technology from the engineering college and then I will see if I can find work and side by side do my masters in technology. Right now I am just looking for a place wherefrom I could get some help so that my annual fees and my monthly expenses for the engineering college can be taken care of," said Dipesh.

"I am not concerned about the admission fees, which is rupees 6,135 as I have kept the sum of rupees 10,000 that my school had given me when I secured 80% in my Madhyamik examination," said Dipesh explaining that SUMI earlier had the rule of awarding anyone who got above 75% a sum of rupees 10,000. His forty two year



Dipesh Kalikoty

old father Nar Bahadur Kalikotey who is a welder in a garage here is proud of his son and wants to make him study further but says that the financial constraints do keep him from fulfilling his son's dream. "I am really proud of Dipesh and the efforts he puts in. I still remember during the examinations he used to study all night sleeping only for two hours. His hard work has paid off but I am also helpless as I earn just Rs. Two thousand a month and it is hard to make even ends meet for a family of six," Nar Bahadur is the only earning member of the family.

Dipesh has his two brothers, and a cousin sister living with him along with his mother at Roussey Bazaar. His two brothers and sister too are studying and is being looked after by their father.

□

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BIG CITY BLUES

In the last issue of this magazine I had written an article on youth and substance abuse in the hills. My focus was on several many students who leave for the metros to pursue further studies but come back saddled with the baggage of substance abuse. Some time later I got this interesting response to my take on the issue that not only took me aback but also forced me to review anew many of my assumptions.

An acquaintance of mine came up to me and said; "Going down to the plains to study broadens not only our mental horizons but also our experimental tendencies. It's a good thing to try out everything." While it is not immediately clear to me whether my acquaintance did actually try out everything including drugs, a pattern does emerge. A skewed sense of values is in operation. Why is it that our youth feels compelled to even consider experimenting with potentially mind-blowing substances? Why don't we produce any Huxleys- curious scientists of mind expansion or Jim Morrisons or Dylan Thomases- creative artists using drugs as rocket fuel for their endeavours. The obvious conclusion is that people here do drugs simply to trip; drunkards would drink solely to get drunk. Yet on closer examination the reasons are always not so pat.

What we are now facing is a repeat of what happened during the agitation. Then, a whole generation of youth, unemployed, uneducated or semi-educated found expression for their frustration in violence. The same scenario presents itself now. Only, the youth today turns to drugs for relief.

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A FOLLOW UP

By Karan Shah

Role models for them are missing and the ones available are horrifically inadequate. The recent history of our region is awash in blood. Though the agitation was for a valid cause, the repercussions have been unfortunate to say the least. The tourism industry took a direct hit and is just managing to crawl back to some semblance of its past success that too due to the efforts of a few individuals. Avenues for self-employment are not easily available. Thus what we now have on our hands is a huge pool of educated but unsettled people. Not only will this cause a massive brain drain from the region, it will also be very frustrating for those who are left behind.

The demands for a separate state or sixth schedules notwithstanding, it is now time for the Council to wake up and take cognizance of a crisis that has now become chronic. Issues more important than Jhankri processions and modes of worship in the hills are now at stake, issues of employment generation and a more intelligent channelisation of educated manpower. For a region that takes pride in receiving the bodybags of martyred jawans from the battlefields of Kargil, we now face a more ignominious and dreadful task of receiving the bodybags of *our jawans*, victims of drug abuse. □

NOVENA PRAYER

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IT HAS WORKED FOR ME!!!**

MRS. IDA D'COSTA
CALCUTTA COTTAGE
R. GRAHAMS HOME

Don Bosco Joti

Preparing the young for Life

By Anup Moktan

Those who have been languishing with no resourceful work lately need not give up hope. Don Bosco Joti, at 14th mile, offers vocational training courses at nominal rates.

To begin with, Don Bosco is an international society (known as Salesians) serving youth in more than 120 countries, imparting holistic education together with good knowledge of theory and practical subjects. It has its international headquarters in Rome.

Spread across almost 9 acres. Don Bosco Joti was established in 2003. The first batch of 72 students completed their 2 year course in June.” Don Bosco Joti is a dream come true for economically challenged boys and girls,” says Brother Johnny, the Director of Don Bosco Joti. The training courses offered in Don Bosco Joti are Welding and Fabrication, Electrician, Secretarial with Computer, Automobile Mechanic, Computer Application, Dress Making and Motor Driving School. There is a hostel for boys within the campus and the authorities are contemplating to open another for girls.

A unique feature of Don Bosco Joti is that it provides practical training outside the purview of the institute. “We have sent students to Good Shepherd IHM, Soods Garden Retreat, BMC, DGH, Etc. for practical training,” says Br. Johnny.” We have also sent students to various



tailoring shops so that they could gain practical knowledge about the trade,” he adds. Priscilla Rai of Lolay, a secretarial and computer student, underwent practical training at Vrindavan School. Similarly, Edwand Lepcha a computer student, and Anthony Lepcha, underwent training at Bajla Grain Store and Prime Tailors, respectively.

Boys and girls from Assam, Siliguri, Mizoram, Darjeeling, Mirik, Jaigaon, and Kalimpong are currently undergoing training at the

Institute. Most of the instructors are local people except a motor-mechanic instructor who hail from Kolkata.” Our main aim is to educate young people to become honest citizens and good persons,” says Br. Johnny. Commenting on the present generation Br. Johnny says: “The interest of the students to excel and to do something fruitful is not here. The enterprising attitude and ambition that one must inculcate to be successful is lacking.”

Anthony Lepcha of Tanyong, a remote village in Kalimpong, is learning Tailoring in the institute. He aims to open a tailoring shop in his village. “We learnt a lot here and the main lesson we learnt is discipline. Don Bosco supports the young people and prepares them to face the further,” he says with new found confidence.



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By Neelkamal Chettri

Skill and commitment from DHR Artisans

It was summer of 1998 and the media were very busy with many stories of the proposal to bestow World Heritage Status on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. I continued to read more about the DHR in the media, and I became fascinated by it all. I recall hearing my mother reminisce about her journey on the DHR as a child, when she used to accompany her mother, during their

annual visits to Dehradun. So, that Puja holiday I decided to visit Tindharia workshops, to experience for myself the magic of the DHR.

Early one October morning I left Darjeeling and was dropped just in front of Tindharia Workshops. As I did not know anyone, or where to begin my voyage I started walking towards the workshops. Just before the workshop

I dropped into a small teashop. There present were a group of men, sitting huddled together drinking tea, and the talk was all about the DHR. We became engaged in conversation. It soon became clear that they had all previously worked, or were still working for, the DHR. I soon realised from these conversations that in Tindharia DHR is an integral part in the lives of almost all of the residents.

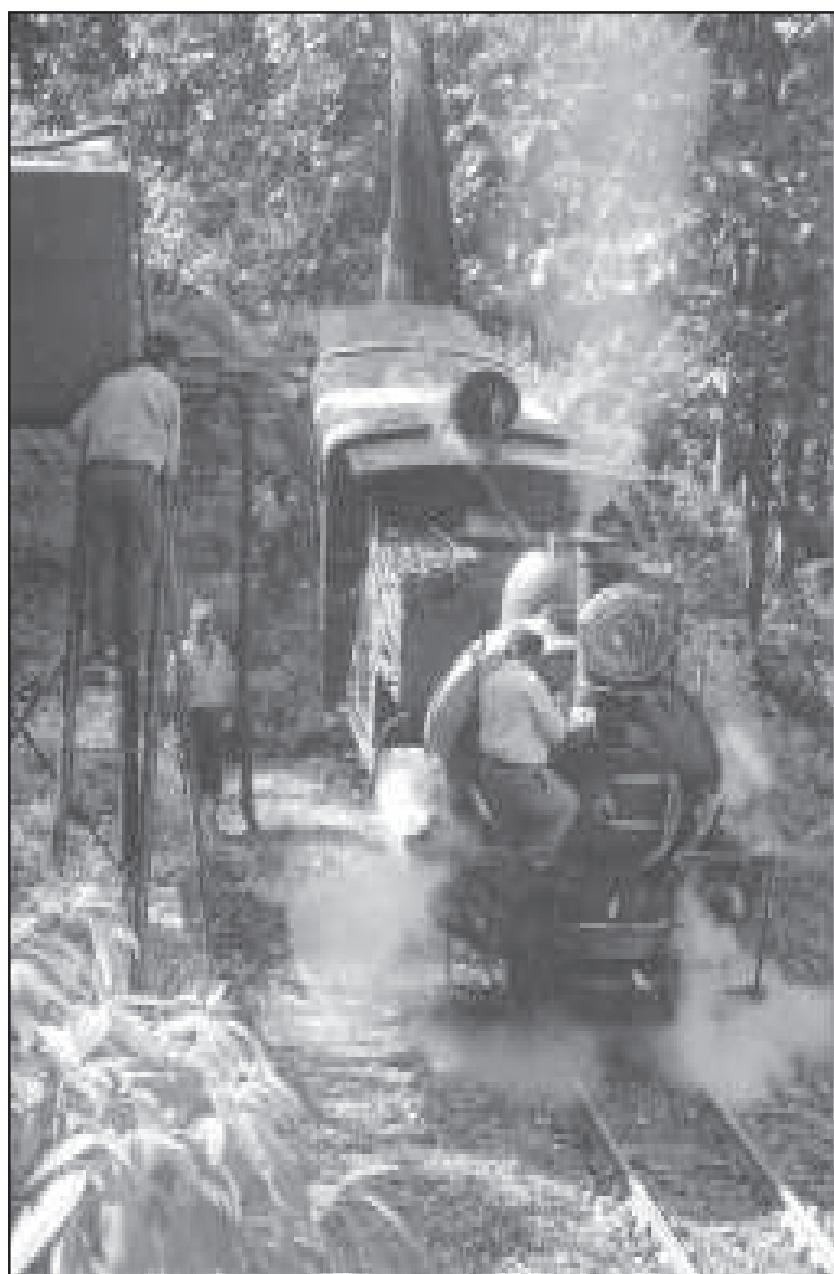
When I told them that I had come to experience the magic of the DHR, I was instantly welcomed and became a part of them. One of them volunteered to take me around the workshop.

He became my guide and gave me a guided tour of the workshop. The workshop has much of value, historical and it's a pity that most of the public are unaware about it. In here was parked the railway saloon, used by the English Governor whenever he visited Darjeeling. Even now it looked most impressive. For a second, I visualized the grandeur of the DHR during her heyday, and hopes surged within me that the grandeur would be back again soon together with the impending World Heritage Status.

Moreover, I had come at the most opportune time as the workshop was gearing up for the forthcoming visit by the Railway Minister, Nitish Kumar to Darjeeling. They were busy building a model of the DHR that was to be presented to the Minister and work was at the feverish best. They told me that getting spare parts was a major problem, but they overcome it by building the necessary spare parts within the workshop. When one thinks that many of the engines are more than 100 years old, it is really remarkable on how they have managed to overcome these odds.

After my workshop tour was over they told me to go to Kurseong if I really wanted to feel the true magic of the DHR and how they overcome against all the odds. In Kurseong I got a glimpse of how the DHR had managed to survive all these years. Without spare parts, without adequate funding and overcoming the ravages of weather, they told me about how the DHR had not only survived but was about to become only the second railway line to be declared by UNESCO a World Heritage site. I met there with Ms Sneh Gupta, who was about to start shooting video footage on the DHR for the Discovery Channel.

In Kurseong Loco Shed, Engine No.78OB was being overhauled, while in the yard carriages were being refurbished. This is where I experienced the magic of the



DHR and those who were really responsible for sustaining the DHR over all these many years.

When the English were setting up the DHR they were highly impressed by how quickly the Nepali boys in the tea gardens learnt the mysteries of the 'engine room' and different processes. The tea plantation needed machinery and the Nepalis had to be taught the mysteries of the engine and the manual of European Engineering Standards. They had to be made 'engine drivers' necessary to keep the machinery going. On the tea gardens they soon learnt the mysteries of the 'engine room' and the different processes of manufacture. For

all these workers showed great aptitude and receptivity that encouraged the DHR to establish the works at Tindharia, which replaced the work previously undertaken at the rear of the loco shed at Tindharia located just below the station. Extension Railways up the Teesta Valley, and the plains line to Kishanganj, doubled the route mileage under DHR control at this time, and this is why Tindaria Works was built just prior to the First World War in 1913. Watching the fitters overhaul the engine was pure magic. They were going about their job with high emotion, good work skills, and ingenuity. The feelings were obviously felt passionately regards their love for the DHR and that nothing would be allowed to prevent them achieving their goal of overhauling the loco. Most of the spare parts were not available, nor were the working conditions of the best. Supplies are also almost non-existent. A landslide had washed away a large portion of the railway line at page Jhora, so they could not bring or use any of the machinery that was at Tindharia Workshops. This just caused more pressure, and problems mounted on the pour staff of the DHR. They told me that even without the support of the Tindharia Workshop, they were determined and confident of completing the job.

The first thing they needed to overhaul was the existing pair of driving wheels from No. 78OB that needed repainting due to wear in service. To facilitate this wheel replacement all that they were using was a jack they had raised the engine so that the wheels could be slithered out. To maintain the engine at that height they had placed logs under the front and rear to keep it raised to working height.

The other DHR group of staff were busy loading the front wheels, which had already been removed, onto a road truck that would carry them to Tindharia Works. Human ingenuity was called for together with the minimal equipment of jack, ropes and logs, enabling them to load the wheel safely aboard the truck.

As I stood watching them work, a boiler expert who was working inside the boiler asked me to join him. Being inside the boiler, the sight was pretty mind-blowing, especially when he explained to me how he was repairing the boiler's firebox. The inside of the boiler

firebox was made of copper and over time it expands. As it expands there are gaps. He repairs the copper boilerplate by chipping away those parts that have expanded so that it fits snugly. The only tools he was using were a hammer and chisel coupled with his skills and human ingenuity. Watching him work reminded me of the master craftsman from Switzerland or England who hand made those high priced Swiss watches or Rolls Royce's.

In the yard they were building a replica of the Saloon that I was previously lying in Tindharia Works. They were racing against time, as the initial plan was to use the Governor's Saloon for the Railway Minister, but the landslide at Pagla Jhora had changed the entire plans so they had to transform an ordinary coach. Such was the confidence level behind the refurbishment team that they delivered the product that would satisfy and meet the standard of the existing saloon.

Next day I came again to Kurseong Loco Shed, where Loco No. 78OB had been painted and stood preening with much grandeur and majestically looking at me, while in the yard stood gleaming a saloon coach that looked like the original. Seeing them today in such tip-top condition, who would have thought under what constraints the people who maintain the DHR work? In my mind I saluted all the fitters, boilermasters and carriage teams, and felt very proud that I had been privileged with the DHR. All have a deep emotional bond with the steam train that makes the journey from NJP to Darjeeling such a pleasureable and memorable journey, as it climbs and steams through the Darjeeling Hills.

What saddens me more, is that now that the DHR has gained its World Heritage Status, the actual working stakeholders are not being involved enough, they appear to be forgotten! The museum needs to be at Tindharia, since this Works has much romance, emotion and history, that is all part and parcel of the DHR. I hope that future plans and actions will include these emotionally involved employees of the DHR and all others in the Hills of Darjeeling who love the DHR. The journey has a certain reverence. Magical and mystical connections also seem most appropriate, coupled with a romance and an overall 'Shangri-La' image remaining in the mind- long may it continue! ■

.....COZ HE DARED TO DREAM

By Sandip C. Jain

Bharat Dangal all of 26 years had always been a dreamer – ever since he was twelve he had dreamt of seeing electric light shine out of the thatched roofed houses of his village- Lingsay- the only problem was that Lingsay was too small, too unimportant, too remotely located and too scarcely populated for the concerned authorities to think that the village merited electricity. It appeared that the lives of those living in this God forsaken far flung village of Lingsay was destined to be spent in darkness.

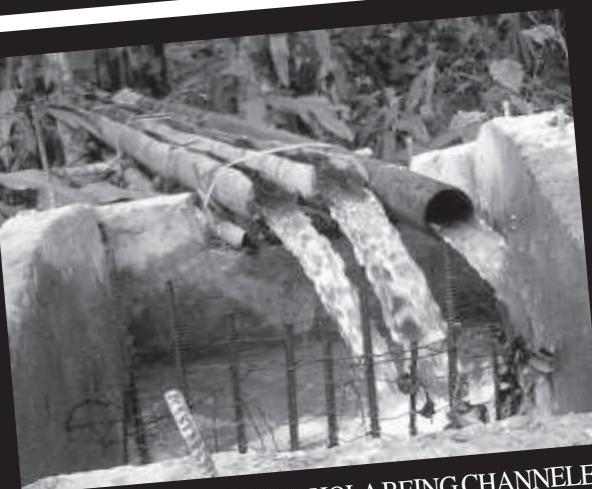
Bharat Dangal- used to sit each night on the courtyard of his little mud baked house envying people living on the opposite hills of Lingsay who were lucky enough to have electricity radiate out of their houses till one night when he decided that enough was enough and that if Lingsay village ever had to have electricity, it was he who had to do something.

“Fortune favours the brave” goes an old saying and it was perhaps not by chance that one day while browsing through an old copy of the Telegraph newspaper, Bharat came across a small news item which talked about mini hydel projects set up in the remote parts of the Kashmir valley – so Bharat thought, “If they can do it why can’t we?” So was imbued within Bharat the desire to bring electricity to his fellow villagers. Having studied upto class X in Pagam Gumba High School at 15th Mile (on the way to Algarah), Bharat jumped headlong into his dreams.

He started off by buying a book on mini hydel projects in Gangtok (where he worked for five years after his education in a medical stores) and mastering the art of how a mini hydel project is set up. “Gaining technical know-how from the books and other sources was the easy part. The difficult part was to convince my fellow villagers on the feasibility of the project,” says Bharat. Bharat with a rye smile speaking further on this subject says, “When I first talked about the project to the other villagers, many of whom were my relatives, they thought I was crazy and many thought that I was out to make a fast buck.” But despite sneering and being made fun off by many of his co villagers, Bharat finally managed to convince twelve other houses of the locality to be a part of his dreams



BHARAT DANGAL



WATER FROM DUKSING KHOLA BEING CHANNELED
AT THE PROJECT SITE



ELECTRICITY AT A HOUSE IN LINGSAY



OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITH BHARAT

Further convincing led to the formation of the “Duksing Khola Mini Hydel Project Committee” after the Duksing Khola (Mountain Stream) on which the project was planned. It was decided that all the thirteen members would equally bear the approximately Rs. 80,000 which was the rough cost of the project. A loan for Rs. 15,000.00 was applied for and received by the committee while the rest was taken care off by

the members. With this money a 2.5KV electric motor and a turbine was purchased from Siliguri and a low cost drain was constructed through which the stream water was cannelized on to the turbine generating 2500 watts of electricity.

Of course everything was not as easy as it sounds in the above description of the construction. Many obstacles had to be overcome and help was in a big shortfall. Once the project commenced only the noble intention to complete the project was not enough, finance was required, infrastructure was required, equipments were required and many other things were in between success and failure. The committee members left no stones unturned in their effort to attain success. “We went to several many people for help before the project was finally

completed but almost all our pleas fell to deaf ears,” says Somenath Dhakal, a member of the committee. But he was quick to add that Mr. Dawa Pakhrin who is also the area councilor of the area gave them a lot of encouragement and motivated them to move forward.

Now, Bharat’s dreams have come true. His house along with twelve others is now lighted up each day. Students studying for their examinations now do not have to shut their books before nightfall, modern amenities like TV, VCR & CD players now adorn several of the houses which are affluent enough giving the womenfolk a little bit of recreation. Says Sunita Sharma, daughter of R. Nirula who is another committee member, “Previously we could do nothing but pass time knitting or listening to the radio. Now I have a TV and a CD player at home and life as such is so much more exciting than before. Also if and when we women of the village have to venture out at night to answer natures call or for any other purpose, we feel much more secure and safe now.”

Says Bharat, “People now no longer call me mad – infact those very people who used to snigger at me earlier are now queuing up with requests to join the committee. Unfortunately the 2.5 KV motor is too small to generate electricity for the entire village but we hope to install a bigger one in future so that each and every house in Lingsay is lighted up.”

So now remote and far flung Lingsay (it is almost 60 Km from Kalimpong town and has to be reached via Rehnock in Sikkim) can finally read under an electric light, it can finally switch on the TV like you and me, it can finally iron its cloths under an electric iron which you and me take for granted and it can finally see movies on a CD player and it is all because someone called Bharat Dangal had dared to dream!!! □

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Recalling KALIMPONG

By Dr. S.B.Wangyel



Jennifer Fox, a daughter of Darjeeling tea planter, who taught in the Homes for a few years in the 60s and is a keen historian of the region recalled Kalimpong in the following way: "Described by some as the prettiest hill station in the Darjeeling District and possibly in India, Kalimpong is as different from Darjeeling as chalk is from cheese.

Never a resort for the Calcutta fashionable, it was able to develop its own identity as an international hill town attracting peoples from all over the world. I learned to love this town where all the tribes and religions of Asia meet."⁽¹⁾ Much before Jennifer was born another European, passing through Kalimpong, on his way to Tibet wrote: "Kalimpong is a beautiful place; it overlooks the valley of the Teesta, and is within easy reach of it: it has the hum, life and interest in the movement of thinks inseparable from a town on a great highway."⁽²⁾

However, I think the best description of Kalimpong came from the Nelsons who used to bring tourists from the USA to the town. Unlike the archetypal tours of the Indian plainsmen the Nelsons took the tourists to the 10th Mile area and the Yankees watched in amazement small factories making incense stick, the Tibetan thankha painters coating their canvas with vegetable colours, the noodle factories and many of the tourists were richer and happier especially after purchasing some souvenirs, the favourite being the colorful somba or the Tibetan boots that had no left or right sides to them.

Anyway this is how the Nelsons saw Kalimpong: "The scarled poinsettias stretch upwards as tall as trees, bamboo frame and earth plastered houses with thatched roofs bid a warm welcome, orchids grow on roadside trees and geraniums in vibrant shades grace humble courtyards." After having stayed in for sometime this is how they felt:

"When you travel there are some scenes that are forever etched on your memory; palaces to be called up when, in the midst of 20th century busy worlds,

there is hunger for a simpler life. Kalimpong is one of those scenes ."⁽³⁾

1 Jennifer Fox: *In the shade of Kanchenjunga*, British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia, London, 1993, p. 164.

2 John Easton: *An Unfrequented Highway through Sikkim and Tibet*, The Scholaris Press, London, 1928.

3 Duane and Marion Nelson: *The Travelers Guidebook for Himalaya Arts and Cultural Trip*, Globle Views, USA, 1985, pp. 83 and 82.

Your Poems, Articles or Suggestions may be sent to us by E-mail
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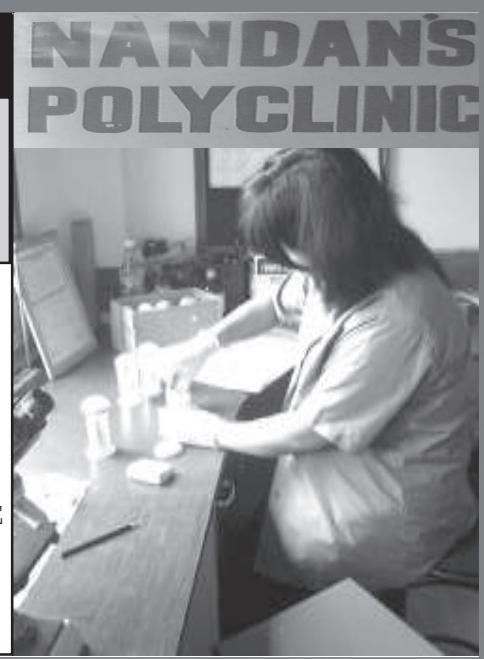
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Expression!!!

The Pilot

Sonam B Wangyal

(Dedicated to Leader Sonam Wangdi (IAF)
Of Lhamo Khangsar, 10th Mile, Kalimpong
Who dies when his helicopter blew up in mid-air)

The Pilot's body was found.
The funeral quieter than the life he led.
The mourners more than the days he spent.

"His kindness was like
A warm embracing wind
On a chilly night."
Someone said.

"He was a father, son and a friend.
Concern and care splashed
Across his forty short years."
A relative wrote.

"He was like the finest silk.
Smooth, soft, sophisticated:
Joy to all who came in contact."
A friend eulogized.

"He was an angle's envy.
Gentle, compassionate and pure:
A hope in the swamp of distress."
The beggar voiced.

"In the charred remains of his pocket
A letter, a note, an angst
in trim script we found.
The policeman said.

(Dear God, I'll forgive You
For all the big jokes
You played on me...
If you forgive me
For the small jokes
I played on you."
The pilot had written.

Not needed here

Sky is very clear tonight,
What a wonderful night.....
Many stars are glittering ,
With a moon smiling beside,
Oh! they are so near,
Right up there.....
Can grab the moon, few stars,
and bring down here,
On stretching hands realized,
they are little far
Jumped, still can't get
tried again and again and again.
Still can't get
Then contemplate,
This is a world of feign,
Where evil and corrupted reign,
A garden full of fear
Sharp voice is herd somewhere,
Forget it...
Beauty not needed here.....

Editor

Sandip C. Jain

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It appears that the quiz that we from the editorial desk were compiling for you since the last six issues of Himalayan Times had become too easy for most to solve. In fact for the last quiz that was published in this column, we received a pile of correct entries. Keeping this in mind we now have the master quizzer from Kalimpong

Mr. Suraj Mani Pradhan

asking you questions on Kalimpong and the surrounding areas. So let the master himself test you now!!!!

This issues questions are-

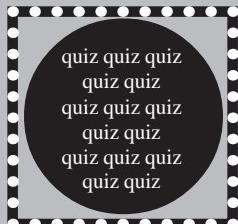
1. In the 1950 edition of Rahul Sanskrityayan's "Darjeeling Parichay", which present day restaurant (it was a bakery during the British days) in Kalimpong receives a fair mention as the only place outside Calcutta where one could obtain bread that would stay fresh for a week or two?
2. When was the Batasia loop in Darjeeling constructed?
3. The name "Teesta" is a Nepali abbreviation of which word?
4. To which Buddhist sect does the Durpin Monastery, Kalimpong (Zangdok Palri monastery) belong to?
5. Who established Kali Mandir(Matri Mandir Ashram) in Kalimpong in 1958?

Answer the above question correctly and send in your entries to us by the 18th of August 2005 to win a sleek Parker

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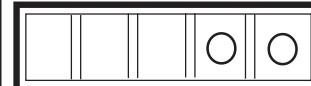


jumble jumble

REWNA



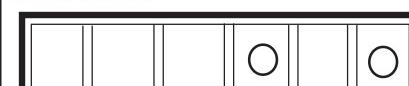
RIKAS



HAMIT



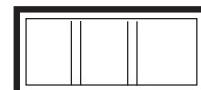
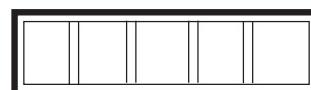
RESHAP



MOLOYA



(Hint: Hill Communities)



Complete the above Jumble and send in your entry with the coupon given below by the 18th of August 2005 to win a free lunch for two at **Soods Garden Retreat, Kalimpong**. The correct answers for the jumble published in the last issue are

KABRU,SIMVU,PANDIM,RATHONG,ONGLETHAN & IAMA ONGDEN

The winner will be decided by a draw of lots. The names of all those who sent in correct answers for the jumble in the last issue are Ganesh Lama, Sunil Labar, Tsheten Bhutia, Mrs. Sona Bhutia, Mahesh Nirula, Mohamud Ansari, Norbu Tshering, Santosh Pradhan, Miss Gita Pradhan, Bikash Goel, Anita Gurung, Sangita Sundas, Manahor Pradhan, Sudesh Kalikoty, M.B.. Yonzon and the winner is-

Tshering Wangmo

R.C.Mintri Road, Kalimpong

Please submit your entry in a plain sheet of paper alongwith this coupon. Please do not tear this page to submit your entry.



Acupuncture

Dr.Bhanu Pradhan

People suffer from pains like back pain head ache joint pain and pains in other parts of the body. Pain is as natural as any other thing in nature. If a patient is diagnosed with back pain, be it prolapsed disc lumbospondylosis, osteoarthritis (spinal) or any other think, according to Western Medical Science treatments like spinal surgery physical therapies, pharmaceutical intervention or epidural type injections are started. But in most cases these therapies do not work perfectly and pain cannot be alleviated and side effect are found damaging kidney and other organs due to profuse consumption of pain killers. As per Chinese Acupuncture theory Yin and Yang i.e. positive and negative powers constant state of dynamic balance in the rhythm of the Sun (yang) and moon (yin). Within 24 hours period each changes over to the other and require each other for overall balance, which provides Qi (chi) vital life force to flow within the body properly, reaching every aspect of our body through the meridinal channel. These meridinal channels are different from the pathway of the various vascular and lymph system in Western Medicine. Basic concept of Acupuncture is to restore proper flow of Qi (chi) letting flow of blood without any intervention. If flow of Qi and blood in the body becomes impeded, pain starts immediately.

Treatment & its effect

How does Acupuncture work?

Thin pre-sterilized, disposable needles are inserted according to patient's diagnosis to the selected meridian points and are left in for 30 to 60 minutes. During the treatment period patient experience a deep sense of relaxation in part because of the endorphins that are released during the treatment period, depending on whether patient's pain is acute or chronic, guides the number of treatment patient needs. But so far my experience is concerned patient's whole body benefits from the affects of the Acupuncture treatment, allowing circulation for oxygen, blood and lymph to support the body's healing process. If the channels have been blocked for a long period of time or if there is pronounced deficiency of Qi (chi) and blood, it is necessary to have Acupuncture for a long period of time to assist the body in regaining it's normal function. Research has proved Acupuncture to cause the release of neuro - chemicals such as endorphin enkephalin, serotonin and corticosteroids all of which to reduce pain and inflammation. Author of this article has very good experience in treating the disease like slip disc, sciatica, spondylosis (cervical & lumbar) migraine, frozen shoulder, sinus, hemiplegia Paraplegia and may other types of local paralysis too by Acupuncture treatment.



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Biography

Subedar Major Jasal Rai

By Manish Rai

Though there are many people, whose courage and sacrifice earned them fame and respect, Subedar Major Jasal Rai was the first person from the Nepali community to be honoured.

He was the foremost person from the Nepali community to go to Britain and become the A.D.C. of King Edward VII of Buckingham in 1901.

At the age of 18, when he was young and tender, leaving his family members, he joined the "Seventh Gorkha Rifles" in 1870. Because of his intelligence and guts he received the title of Subedar in 1st December, 1896. After the age of 26, he fought bravely in battles like 2nd AFGHAN War - 1878, 3rd Burma War - 1885-86, Sikkim - Tibet War - 1887, etc. One can know about his bravery and achievements by the number of medals he secured throughout his life.

He was not contented with fighting many battles himself, so he send his only son Harkalal Rai to army, who fought bravely in order to keep the name of his father. He also send his grandson Lalbahadur Rai and even his grand - daughters Ratnamaya Rai and Buddhimaya Rai to army. He was not only a brave soldier but also a true freedom fighter.

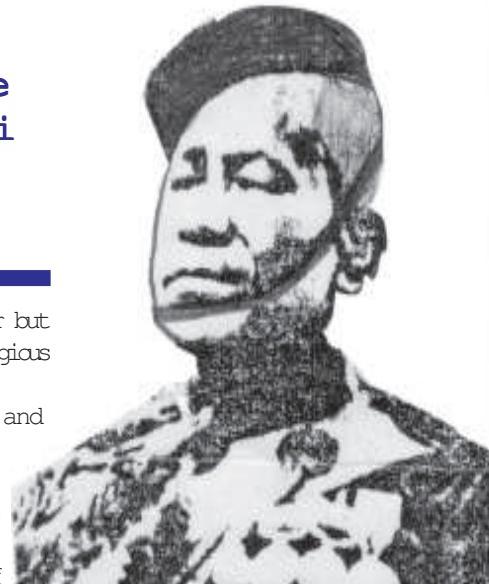
King Edward heard of his heroic deeds which spread rapidly and soon he was called at Buckingham Palace to receive the title of A.D.C. This made all the Nepali people proud. He was punctual with his work and never had trouble throughout his working days. He was retired in 1902 from the army life and after that he went to Pedong and settled there.

He was not only a brave soldier but also a great social worker, religious and educated.

After retiring he went to Pedong and established a small village. In those days, the cost of salt was even much more than gold and it was very rare. The scarcity of salt brought difficulties in most of the villages like Kagay, Ladam, etc. His enthusiasm and effort eased the transport of salt in these places. The people of those places thanked him most generously.

He gave utmost priority to education knowing the value of it. He used to say "One who is armed with wisdom never faces troubles, his wisdom will be his friend, wealth and family". He had a good relation with Father Donald, who was the then principal of St. George High School. His efforts and hard work for the upliftment of this school cannot be measured but only be applauded. Today most of the students from Pedong and other places study here.

He was also a religious man. He used to say "Religion is the main source through which man can remain alive in this world, it teaches us how to work in discipline and how to exist in this world". He never discriminated among the religions. He was a true follower of "Equality".



In 1920, he established "Entrails co-operative Bank" in Pedong. He remained its President from 1920 to 1940. Within this period, he helped most of the rural villages financially and brought development in those places.

In order to provide education to the poor people of the nearby villages, he send an application letter to the Municipality of Kalimpong. But his letter was rejected. Later he pleaded for the construction of road from Kalimpong to Pedong. The construction of road started and its opening ceremony was held in 1950 but unfortunately he died on 21st March, 1948.

Till today the work he has done remains immortal in the hearts of the people. He was buried in Pedong. More or less all the people from Pedong and the nearby villages came to attend his burial ceremony. He got all the respect and love which a true protagonist should get.

He was indeed a great hero of a great mother. □

nostalgia



A VIEW OF MAIN ROAD IS CAPTURED IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. THE ELEVATED GROUND SEEN IN THE FOREGROUND IS WHERE THE PRESENT DAY SUPER MARKET STANDS.

ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

Mr. Neel Kamal Chhetri

Is a freelance writer who has worked closely with several many Environmental Groups. Is a regular contributor in the Statesman.

Manish Rai

Is a student in Kalimpong and a member of the Jasral Rai family.

Dr. Bhanu Pradhan

Is a doctor who has a clinic at Maa Super Market and considered an expert in the science of Acupuncture.

Dr. Sonam B. Wangyel

Is a Jaigoan based doctor who is acknowledged as an authority on the history of this region.

Mr. Anup Moktan

Is a student of Kalimpong College who is also a correspondent with Himalayan Times.

Mr. Gautam Lama

Is a teacher in Benjamine's Garden School and is a cartoonist with a Siliguri based paper.

Mr. Karan Shah

Is a young career journalist reporting for a National daily from Kalimpong.

3C's

MAIN ROAD
KALIMPONG

formerly

Glenary's



BREAD



COFFEE



BURGERS



MILK SHAKES



INDIAN COMBOS



JUICE



CAKES



COLD DRINKS



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